**2nd Australian Universal Design Conference**

**Transcript of the Panel Session: The Economics of Inclusion**

**Minor edits by Jane Bringolf**

**Panel Members** were Ms Ro Coroneos, Lendlease; Ms Sally Coddington, Curb Cut Effect, The Hon Kelly Vincent MLC, South Australia, and Mr Paul Nunnari, Department of Premier and Cabinet (NSW).

MS SALLY CODDINGTON:

So what happens when a person with over 20 years of marketing and business development experience has a child with quadriplegia? It sounds like the start of a joke, doesn't it, but it's not actually a joke. That's me and what you get is someone who's fascinated with the business of inclusion.

So it's not just because our family needs restaurants that don't have steps and that have plenty of room to manoeuvre a wheelchair, it's not just because we appreciate adequate toileting facilities for Nicky so we can spend a complete day out together, it's not even because we love to travel as a family, especially overseas, and we'd actually pay a premium for accessible transport and accommodation. It's actually because I can't understand why most businesses still fail to appreciate the massive untapped opportunity in creating products, services, spaces and experiences that are accessible not only to people with a disability but also older people, large people, small people, people with strollers or luggage, accessible to everybody.

Accessible to all of these people and their friends and families, because one‑third of families have a family member with a disability and 70% of people with a disability socialise with friends and family at least once a week. 40% eat at restaurants at least once a week and 23% go to department stores or shopping centres at least once a week, and they do it with friends and family. People are increasingly making choices about where they spend their money based on how easy it is to access and how welcome they feel.

People who identify as having a disability constitute a market similar in size to China at approximately 1.27 billion people worldwide. Their friends and family add another 2.2 billion people and together they control over $8 trillion US in annual disposable income.

Let me put that in context with you. Marketers fall all over themselves to reach the teenager market, so that's people aged 13 to 19. You see it everywhere from clothing and footwear to technology. But globally teens have about $820 billion in spending power, so that's about 10% of that of people with disabilities and their families. So I'm talking here about people who identify as having a disability. That's about 1 in 5 people or 20% of people. But in most cases that's not older people with an impairment, even though it's the kind of impairment that could really benefit from self‑opening doors or large font menus or less obtrusive music.

So let's add older people as consumers to the untapped opportunity continued to be ignored. Baby boomers are one of the fastest growing demographics. In Australia there are over 4.7 million baby boomers and the proportion of people over 65 is expected to more than double in the next few decades. But they hold more than 40% of Australia's wealth.

So having said that, there are some great examples of businesses that do inclusion of people with disabilities and other areas of diversity well, and I'm just going to show you three of my favourites. So let's start with supermarket trolleys (shows photograph). You may have seen these trolleys in the leading supermarkets. It's a trolley for parents with a child with a disability and the trolley allows for a child of up to 70 kilograms. It has padded sides and a harness and additional support and you may or may not also know that some supermarkets have introduced a quiet hour at the beginning of trading so that families can actually come with their children or their family members that have sensory challenges.

We're all familiar with the high shallow convenience trolley that reduces the need to bend and stretch. It's easy to steer, creating a smooth and stable trip around the store, particularly good for older customers. Trolleys with specially designed handles that give a choice on how you prefer to hold and push the trolley. So supermarket trolleys are a great example of variety and choice for different customers and their needs.

So you may or may not have seen a recent TV campaign, the NBT TV campaign, that's titled silent reunion. This ad shows two deaf friends who've lost contact and are reunited. They appear in the same room sharing stories, communicating in sign language. Subtitles bring viewers into the conversation, but it transpires that they aren't together at all but talking over video call thanks to high‑quality broadband connection. So NBN worked with Deaf Services Queensland to demonstrate how fast broadband can empower, enable and help remove some of the communication barriers Australians with disability face. The campaign highlights how fast broadband is helping bridge the digital divide, enabling all Australians, not just those who are deaf, to have closer and more meaningful connections with their loved ones no matter where they are.

Here is another ad which is one of my favourites. Wimpy Burger is a fast food chain out of South Africa and they did a social media campaign where they used sesame seeds to write on top of the burger buns to describe what was in the burger in Braille. They did video vignettes of people who were blind reading the burgers and it was just really fun. But it was a social media campaign to promote the fact that they were making Braille menus available in their stores. But what was really interesting about it was the extent of viral impact that the campaign had globally and outside the disability community as well, and it really showed that the economic impact of inclusion in enhancing your image, but also in creating viral opportunities to talk about your business as well.